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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 1 November 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson ..... (Iceland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 70: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*)

(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*) (A/72/18 and A/72/291)

(b) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (A/72/285, A/72/287, A/72/319, A/72/323 and A/72/324)

Agenda item 71: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/72/137 and A/72/286)

1. **Mr. Ajayi** (Nigeria) said that the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance remained a global challenge and a priority for his country, as its constitution prohibited all discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnicity or tribe. The notion of racial superiority was repugnant and had no place in modern society. Nigeria strongly condemned all acts of religious hatred and incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, and wished to see a consensus within the international community on ensuring a world free of racism. Universal ratification and full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action should be the normative basis for international efforts to eliminate racial discrimination.

2. Reaffirming its support for the International Decade for People of African Descent and noting the Secretary-General's call for the mainstreaming of agendas for women and girls of African descent in the political and socio-economic spheres of national life, his delegation welcomed the proposed global campaign to counter xenophobia and the concrete measures being taken to improve the human rights situation of people of African descent worldwide, and supported the call to strengthen intercultural dialogue, tolerance and respect for diversity. Nigeria was deeply concerned at the human rights violations to which migrants and refugees were exposed, sometimes with the complicity of Governments, and urged transit and destination countries to treat migrants with dignity and respect regardless of nationality or immigration status, calling on the international community to formulate a comprehensive rights-based response to tackle the root causes of migration and migrant vulnerability.

3. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that her country's legislation guaranteed respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality in political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of public life for all citizens, irrespective of race, colour, nationality or ethnicity. In 2016, Ukraine had presented two periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. Human rights instruments offered a strong international framework for eliminating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, which persisted throughout the world and required urgent capacity-building for effective application of existing legislation and engagement with Government actors and civil society organizations.

4. Since the beginning of its occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol, the Russian Federation had mounted a broad campaign against ethnic Ukrainians and the Crimean Tatar community, who faced continuing harassment, abuse and restrictions. The occupying authorities were imposing ethnic Russian dominance on the peninsula with a campaign of cultural erasure through discrimination. The Government of Ukraine had instituted proceedings for violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination through the International Court of Justice, which had ordered Russia to refrain from limiting the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to conserve its representative institutions, to ensure the right for Ukrainian citizens to study the Ukrainian language, and to avoid aggravating or extending the dispute. Six months later, the Russian Federation had still failed to implement the order in full.

5. Moreover, the Russian Government had been endorsing far-right and paramilitary movements and approving their participation in the ongoing aggression against Ukraine in a hybrid warfare strategy while the State-owned media encouraged ethnic hostility through hate propaganda. Her delegation urged the Russian Federation to immediately cease all acts of racial discrimination against persons, groups or institutions, particularly in the occupied territories.

6. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Venezuela) said that the racist and xenophobic discourse prevailing in some countries was exacerbating intolerance, violence, fear, supremacism and the suffering of vulnerable groups based on their social situation, ethnicity, religion, nationality or language. The rising use of new information and communications technology was also helping to spread messages of hate and intolerance, generating global tensions that undermined peace efforts.

7. Refugees and migrants fleeing armed conflicts or distressing situations were often victims of discrimination and mistreatment that violated their human rights and freedom, despite the important contribution they made to their host societies. Venezuela had been a welcoming country of destination for migrants from around the world for decades and had worked tirelessly to promote a culture of coexistence and tolerance in its multi-ethnic and multicultural society, opposing all manifestations of racism, xenophobia and intolerance and discrimination based on birth, sex, race, religion, language, sexual orientation or other personal or social status.

8. The Law against Racial Discrimination had been passed to prevent and punish racial discrimination and provide victims with recourse to justice, and the National Institute for Combating Racial Discrimination addressed specific cases of discrimination and consolidated the institutional framework. Venezuela rejected all attempts to promote racist practices or ideologies based on racial, ethnic or religious superiority, and all manifestations of racism or xenophobia, nationalist exceptionalism, advocacy of hatred and racial discrimination. The resurgence of those trends was a serious setback for national and international coexistence, a threat to new generations and a main cause of violent extremism and terrorism.

9. **Mr. Narteh-Messan** (Togo) said that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had spared no effort to make its working methods more efficient and adopt new approaches. Despite its progress over the past fifty years, multiple challenges remained, including the inability or reluctance to acknowledge and denounce acts of racial discrimination. His delegation therefore welcomed the Special Rapporteur's report on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contributed to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (see A/72/291), and shared concerns at the sharp increase in racist and xenophobic incidents worldwide and the continued targeting of vulnerable groups, including migrants and asylum seekers.

10. Togo reaffirmed its condemnation of all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities on the basis of ethnic origin or religious belief. His country had taken statutory and regulatory measures to combat all discrimination, including accession to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education. The new penal code incorporated the elements of the definition of racial discrimination set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and established custodial sentences and fines for acts of discrimination. Togo would continue work on improving its legal system to take all provisions of the Convention into account. His delegation supported the Special Rapporteur's assertion that education remained the most effective means of combating the potential negative influence of political parties, movements and extremist groups on young people.

11. **Ms. Sucharikul** (Thailand) said that her country was a pluralistic, culturally diverse nation whose openness was at the source of its vibrant economic, social and cultural life and development. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to the elimination of all forms of racism and discrimination, and its Constitution guaranteed equality, rights and liberties, and equal protection under the law for all persons. Committed to implementing obligations under the International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, her country had in October 2016 withdrawn its reservation to article 4 on the prohibition of incitement of racial hatred.

12. Thailand had ratified the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation and attached importance to political commitments made in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. At the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016, the Prime Minister had also pledged additional assistance for displaced persons.

13. Social harmony could only be achieved through communication between migrants and host communities based on mutual respect and understanding. Thailand recognized the contribution of migrants to economic development and had benefited from a large migrant labour force coming mainly from neighbouring countries. Ensuring the legal status of all persons was key to facilitating access to rights and public services. Thailand strongly supported education and health for all without discrimination, and would further expand its universal health coverage and education-for-all schemes to include migrants.

14. **Ms. Grigoryan** (Armenia) said that her country strongly supported the protection of rights of ethnic, national and religious groups in international forums. In November 2017, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe would hold a conference in Yerevan on "Countering and preventing hate crimes against Christians and members of other religious groups". The most dangerous means of disseminating hate and cultivating racial hatred was the

institutionalization of racism, as Azerbaijan was doing, by openly encouraging the persecution of other groups, nations or races.

15. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples were fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Unfortunately, not all States were complying with those obligations. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh had fought historical injustice and persistent discrimination throughout seventy years of Azerbaijani rule, only to face ethnic cleansing by the newly independent Azerbaijan at the beginning of 1990s. Nagorno-Karabakh was struggling for self-determination and freedom from a despotic Azerbaijani regime that glorified Ramil Safarov, the murderer of an Armenian officer. The use of force could only exacerbate the situation and eventually trap the parties in protracted conflict. The human rights and fundamental freedoms of those residing in conflict areas should be upheld regardless of the legal status of the territories.

16. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that the right to self-determination was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and guaranteed pursuant to the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Violation of the right of colonized peoples to self-determination was a form of racial discrimination and impeded their enjoyment of all other human rights. It was critical, therefore, to ensure that all peoples living in the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories listed by the United Nations were allowed to exercise that right by participating in free and impartial plebiscites as, indeed, was called for in the relevant United Nations resolutions. Algeria would continue to support the right of all colonized peoples to take part in such plebiscites, including, in particular, the Sahrawi people, who had suffered under colonialism for more than four decades.

17. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that the international community was in agreement on the evolving nature of international law, but a number of countries were unfortunately trying to freeze the interpretation of self-determination to an outdated notion from the 1960s. Self-determination had been enshrined in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Subsequently, to address States' concerns and prevent an exclusive interpretation of the principle of self-determination, a resolution regarding its implementation had defined three options for self-determination: independence, free association with an independent State and integration with an independent State. That resolution had in turn been complemented by the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which reiterated that self-determination could take different forms, including any political status freely determined by a people.

18. From a legal perspective, the exercise of self-determination was framed by the fundamental principle of territorial integrity. Self-determination could not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any actions that would dismember or impair the territorial integrity or political unity of a sovereign and independent State. In practice, the exercise of self-determination had undergone major developments. Although the main function of the principle had been to dismantle the colonial empires in the 1960s, the principle of self-determination was now being used to democratize Nation States to avoid balkanization and to guarantee peace and stability both regionally and internationally.

19. Following the proliferation of independence movements in the 1960s, the general international trend had supported autonomy, expressed through local democracy, economic participation, and the preservation and promotion of tribal, linguistic and cultural identities. In many situations, autonomy allowed for going beyond the status quo, in order to cultivate peace, trust and reconciliation. It was essential to go beyond the exclusive perception of self-determination and outdated independence-focused ideologies, and look towards new forms of self-determination that would allow populations to fully enjoy their rights, development and well-being.

20. His delegation regretted that self-determination continued to be the subject of contentious interpretations, in violation of the relevant international instruments. The interpretation of self-determination could not be reduced to a single meaning. It was deplorable that, despite the legal and practical developments concerning self-determination, it was still inaccessible for the indigenous Kabyle people in Algeria, owing to that country's dispute with Morocco over its Saharan territory under the guise of self-determination. His delegation called on the international community to intervene and guarantee the Kabyle their rights to self-determination and linguistic and cultural autonomy.

21. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that the rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric was an alarming trend, and his country rejected any attempt to equate Islam with violence and terrorism. Political and religious leaders and the media had an important role to play in

combating racism and xenophobia and promoting respect for diversity. Azerbaijan was a multi-ethnic country with State policy that promoted intercultural and interreligious dialogue and multiculturalism. Located at the crossroads of the East and West and a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council of Europe, the country had made tremendous efforts in building bridges among different civilizations globally.

22. Armenia's continued military aggression and occupation of a significant portion of Azerbaijani territories and its ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis aimed at creating an ethnically homogenous society were an integral part of Armenia's policy of hatred based on historical, cultural, racial and religious prejudices. The Government of Armenia had openly adopted Nzhdehism, the racist ideology of the Armenian Nazi collaborator Garegin Nzhdeh that fostered irrational nationalistic sentiments including the superiority of the Armenian people, a drive towards territorial expansion and a preference for war over peace.

23. The right to self-determination was applicable to peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and peoples subjected to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation, including those under foreign military occupation. Nevertheless, there were instances of flagrant misinterpretation of the right to self-determination, especially when it was used to justify the unlawful use of force, military occupation and unilateral secession from independent States supported by outside forces, as was the case with the continued aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan.

24. Armenia spared no effort to impose the view that the principle of self-determination could be applied to unilateral secession for the Armenian ethnic minority group living in Azerbaijan. However, the realization of any right could not be achieved through illegal means. The fact that the illegal situation continued because of political circumstances did not mean that it was therefore rendered legal. In situations of armed conflict, no peace could be reached that was inconsistent with peremptory norms of international law, which included the prohibition of aggression, genocide and racial discrimination.

25. **Ms. Al Hammadi** (United Arab Emirates) expressed condolences to the people and Government of the United States of America for the deaths caused by the previous day's terrorist attack in New York.

26. She said that human rights principles, including the principle of non-discrimination, were enshrined in her country's Constitution and safeguarded in its legislation. The United Arab Emirates continued to take all necessary steps to ensure its full compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and was working with all relevant domestic and international stakeholders to strengthen respect for human rights and establish a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence: a particularly important objective for the country, which hosted nationals from some 200 States. Indeed, in its concluding observations on the combined eighteenth to twenty-first periodic reports of the United Arab Emirates (CERD/C/ARE/CO/18-21), published in September 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had commended the significant progress achieved by her country in that regard, as well as its efforts to promote social justice, workers' rights and gender equality and to combat human trafficking.

27. In 2016, the United Arab Emirates had appointed a minister of tolerance to facilitate the country's efforts to combat all forms of extremism and discrimination and entrench a culture of mutual respect, pluralism and inter-cultural and interreligious dialogue. The Government had also launched the National Tolerance Programme in order to combat all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, religion and national origin and promote peaceful coexistence, and had established the International Institute for Tolerance, which was collaborating with the Sawab Centre, which strove to counter extremist propaganda, as well as with the Hedayah International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in order to promote coexistence and foster dialogue among societies worldwide.

28. The United Arab Emirates was extremely concerned that thousands of innocent people had been forced from their homes because of their race or religion, and, in that connection, called on the United Nations to shoulder its responsibility to resolve the world's ongoing humanitarian and political crises and address their very serious repercussions. Her country would continue to work closely with the mechanisms and specialized agencies of the United Nations system with a view to combating racial discrimination, and would continue to provide financial support to the relevant United Nations funds and programmes, including the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

29. **Ms. Grigoryan** (Armenia) said that the delegation of Azerbaijan appeared to be a follower of the Nazi propaganda strategy according to which, if a lie was big enough and repeated often enough, people would

eventually come to believe it. In reality, owing to the self-defence organized by Garegin Nzhdeh against foreign invasion, the Armenian population of Zangezur had been spared the same fate as the Armenian population of Nakhchivan, which had been subjected to atrocities and ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijanis and their collaborators. Nzhdeh had become a national hero for protecting Armenians from ethnic cleansing during the foreign invasion, whereas Ramil Safarov had become the national hero of Azerbaijan for executing Armenian officers in their sleep during military training.

30. The attempts made by Azerbaijan to deprive the people of Nagorno-Karabakh of their right to self-determination had resulted in ethnic cleansing, aggression and barbarism unleashed by Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Large-scale military aggression by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016 had been accompanied by gross violations of international humanitarian law in an apparent attempt to terrorize the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. The images of atrocities, including beheadings, of the kind committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, had been circulated on Azerbaijani media in a self-congratulatory manner. The perpetrators had been publicly decorated by the authorities. Those inhumane brutalities were reminiscent of the horrors of the past, the deportation and massacres of Armenians in Baku and elsewhere in Azerbaijan, preceded and followed by other atrocities in Nagorno-Karabakh itself. The four-day military aggression by Azerbaijan in April 2016 had demonstrated that nothing had changed in practice. The aspiration of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination had been legitimate at that time and remained legitimate. As in the early 1990s, Azerbaijan had once again demonstrated its total and irreversible loss of any claim of jurisdiction over the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. That military aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh had claimed more than 100 lives, including those of civilians, women and children.

31. Rather than preparing its population for peace, as had been requested by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, Azerbaijan had for years been fuelling anti-Armenian propaganda. The 2016 report on Azerbaijan by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance stated that political leaders, educational institutions and the media had continued to use hate speech against Armenians. An entire generation of Azerbaijanis had grown up listening to that hateful rhetoric.

32. There was no alternative to a peaceful settlement of the conflict with the intermediation of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group. To demonstrate its commitment to such a peaceful settlement, Azerbaijan should immediately and unconditionally implement the recent agreements on the establishment of mechanisms to investigate cease-fire violations.

33. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that the Armenian statement was full of distortions and his delegation rejected it categorically. It showed that Armenia was trying to mislead the international community.

34. The Armenian delegate considered Nzhdeh to be a national hero, but he had been a staunch Nazi collaborator and a general in the Waffen SS. Such people and their teachings were massively promoted by the Government of Armenia. The programme of the ruling Republican Party openly recognized Nzhdeism as a national ideology and it was included in the curriculum of secondary and higher schools. As a result, the younger generation was being brought up in that spirit. Numerous public places were named after Nzhdeh, and monuments had been unveiled in the presence of high-ranking officials not only to Nzhdeh but also to many convicted war criminals and terrorists. Armenia should abandon that racist ideology and learn to live in peace with its neighbours.

35. Armenia had unleashed a war against Azerbaijan, attacked Azerbaijani cities and territories, carried out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale, and destroyed the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people. In 1993, the Security Council had adopted four resolutions condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories, and demanding the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Council had confirmed that Nagorno-Karabakh was part of Azerbaijan and reaffirmed its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its international borders.

36. It was also essential to recall the direct involvement of the current political and military leadership of Armenia in brutal massacres that had claimed the lives of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians, including children, women and the elderly. Evidence of the special status those terrorists and war criminals had in Armenia could also be seen in their glorification at the State level. They had been elevated to the level of national heroes and had State decorations bestowed upon them.

37. The past and current leadership of Armenia was well known for its promotion of hate speech and its incitement to violence. Speaking before the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, a former president of Armenia had talked about the ethnic incompatibility of Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The President of the

Council of Europe at the time had said that the Council had never before heard the term "ethnic incompatibility".

38. In 2014, the president of Armenia had made another racist statement. Taking pride in the destruction by Armenia of Azerbaijani cities and the killing of Azerbaijani citizens in the occupied territories, he had threatened to unleash ballistic missile attacks on the territory of Azerbaijan. He had claimed that those missiles had a range of over 300 kilometres and could destroy any Azerbaijani settlement such as the city of Ağdam in one of the occupied areas of Azerbaijan.

39. **Ms. Grigoryan** (Armenia) said that it was disappointing that Azerbaijan continued to mislead the international community on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh by making false allegations that Armenia rejected. Azerbaijan had recognized that the equal rights and self-determination of peoples should be among the principles of conflict resolution in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh. Denying the rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh at the present meeting was contrary to what had already been agreed upon by the highest authorities of Azerbaijan.

40. Furthermore, Azerbaijan had, as usual, referred selectively to only some provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, which not only made no reference to the armed forces of Armenia, but also clearly indicated that the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding military security zone were under the control of the Nagorno-Karabakh defence army. The resolutions also included condemnations of the violation of cease-fires and demands for immediate cessations of hostilities, all measures that were clearly addressed to Azerbaijan and had been rejected by that country. Moreover, all Security Council resolutions recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. Therefore, if Azerbaijan wished to make progress towards implementing those resolutions, it should first and foremost reach out to the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. The resolutions did not give Azerbaijan the right to commit mass atrocities against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

41. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that the glorification of Nzhdeh and others who had collaborated with the Nazis during World War II was a sign of disrespect for the millions of Soviet soldiers who had died during that war.

42. Regarding the April 2016 hostilities, Azerbaijan had taken appropriate measures to counter the use of force by Armenia in order to protect its own territorial integrity and sovereignty and to ensure the safety of the civilian population. Armenia could not deny that, from the start, hostilities had been conducted exclusively in the territories of Azerbaijan.

43. The occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia was the main obstacle to the resolution of the conflict. Armenia had purposefully derailed the peace process and continued to consolidate the current status quo of occupation by strengthening its military build-up in the territories and changing the demographic, cultural and physical character of those territories. Armenia should understand that military force was not a solution and would never lead to an outcome desired by Armenia. It should therefore end its provocation, engage constructively in the conflict settlement process, and withdraw its armed forces from Azerbaijan. It should also implement Security Council resolutions and resolutions of other international organizations.

44. In the concluding observations of its periodic report on Armenia, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had expressed its concern over the absence of legislation criminalizing racist organizations and participation in such organizations, and over the use of racist hate speech and discriminatory statements in public discourse including by public and political figures and in the media. The Committee's recommendation was that Armenia should take measures to condemn and distance itself from such public discourse.

45. **Mr. Lukiantsev** (Russian Federation) said that Georgia should recognize the new political realities. The two sovereign States of South Ossetia and Abkhazia had their own Governments and their own legal systems.

46. He would disregard the statement made by the representative of Ukraine regarding an alleged occupation by the Russian Federation. Instead, it should be recalled that the people of Crimea had exercised their right to self-determination in March 2014, and that the right to self-determination was enshrined not only in the United Nations Charter but also in the international human rights covenants and in the 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations. The residents of Crimea enjoyed all human rights and freedoms to which they were entitled under the constitution of the Russian Federation and international agreements signed by the Russian Federation. Persons who considered that their rights had been violated had the right to use all existing legal means to seek legal protection and request the courts to restore those rights. According to the statistics of the legal system in the Republic of Crimea and in the federal city of Sevastopol, the system was working more than effectively.

47. **Ms. Kipiani** (Georgia) said that it was regrettable that the comments of the Russian Federation merely

served the purpose of misleading the international community. The Russian Federation was continuing its policy of violating Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity by breaching the United Nations Charter, the 2008 six-point cease-fire agreement brokered by the European Union, the norms and principles of international law and all Security Council resolutions on Georgia.

48. The Russian Federation continued to occupy 20 per cent of the sovereign territory of Georgia. Several waves of ethnic cleansing against Georgians and other crimes committed in the occupied territories had been confirmed in numerous international documents by the United Nations Security Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others.

49. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that it was regrettable that the Russian Federation continued to deny reality, especially the fact that the international community recognized the Russian Federation as an occupying Power. The actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine constituted serious crimes against international peace, and the Russian Federation was blatantly violating its international obligations, especially General Assembly resolutions on territorial integrity and the human rights situation in Crimea, and had ignored requests by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for full access by international human rights monitoring missions to Crimea. Occupied Crimea had thus become a territory of repression.

50. The Russian Federation should remember that the Crimean nation did not exist. There were ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars but there was no Crimean nation. Furthermore, self-determination could not be conducted in violation of Ukrainian and international law and with the direct use of the hostile armed forces of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation should therefore cease its wrongful acts in Ukraine, stop its aggression and put an end to its tactics of increasing human suffering.

51. **Mr. Lukiantsev** (Russian Federation) said that the delegation of Ukraine had repeatedly claimed that there was no such thing as a Crimean people with a right to self-determination. In reality, the right to self-determination could be exercised in various forms, one of which was to be autonomous within one or more States. Before 2014, when the people of Crimea decided to join the Russian Federation, there had been the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Therefore, the people of Crimea had already exercised their right to self-determination within Ukraine but the policy of denying those people any rights and opportunities and of denying their existence had influenced the decision of the people of Crimea to decide through the referendum to join the Russian Federation.

52. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that the Committee was considering the situation of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories that the United Nations and the international community had recognized as being subject to colonial rule; it had not convened to consider the increasingly outrageous allegations being made against her country by Morocco. Instead of making baseless accusations against another Member State, Morocco should take the time to reflect on its own domestic problems. The international community should, moreover, look into Morocco's despicable human rights record. Algeria remained steadfast in its support for all peoples, including the Sahrawi people, who were denied their right to self-determination, and called for them to be allowed to exercise that right through free and impartial plebiscites, in accordance with international law. Algeria commended the efforts of the Secretary-General to facilitate the resumption of negotiations with a view to achieving a solution that would provide for the self-determination of the Sahrawi people, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2351 (2017).

53. Algeria remained deeply concerned that only very limited progress had been achieved in that regard, and was also very concerned at the deteriorating human rights situation in Western Sahara, whose native inhabitants had been subject to colonialism for over four decades. The United Nations must intensify its efforts to bring to an end all forms of exploitation and occupation worldwide, and must reject all unilateral attempts to deny an entire people its right to self-determination. In closing, she underscored that Algeria, a non-party to the conflict in Western Sahara, supported all United Nations initiatives endorsed by Member States for the resolution of that conflict.

54. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that the Committee was considering not a territory but the right to self-determination, which Algeria wanted to apply only to the Moroccan Sahara. His delegation had already explained the concept of self-determination. Algeria could not therefore impose its biased and partial interpretation of the right to self-determination.

55. One of the most ancient peoples in Africa, namely, the Kabyle people, continued to be subjected to the systematic denial of their rights and fundamental freedoms, especially their right to self-determination. Those 12 million people, who had lived in the region for 9,000 years, should enjoy all their rights including the right to self-determination. Sadly, the United Nations continued to ignore their legitimate aspiration to

freedom, equality and respect for their cultural and linguistic identity. The United Nations should shoulder its responsibility for those people by granting them their right to self-determination.

56. The delegation of Algeria had also spoken of respect for human rights. Since the debate was also about racial discrimination, it should be noted that Algeria had recently taken action against migrants from other African countries on its territory. In spite of condemnation by the international community and organizations such as Amnesty International, Algeria had arrested nationals of sub-Saharan countries, including minors, some of them unaccompanied, and forcibly expelled them to neighbouring countries. The new wave of arrests had begun in September when the Algerian police and gendarmerie had begun arbitrary arrests of migrants in the capital and surrounding areas on the basis of ethnic profiling. The police had not sought to determine whether those people were legally resident in Algeria. Some had been undocumented but others had valid visas. Ethnic profiling and the massive and arbitrary expulsions were proof of a discriminatory attitude against sub-Saharan migrants; instead of trampling on their rights and expelling them en masse, the Algerian authorities should counter ethnic discrimination and hate speech, and reform the laws on the residency of migrant workers in Algeria.

57. The issue of the Moroccan Sahara was merely a matter of territorial integrity and national sovereignty for Morocco. Morocco had irreversibly recovered its Saharan territories through the Madrid agreement, as recognized by the United Nations in 1975. Algeria had not been a mere observer and had supported the creation of a separatist movement, spending huge sums to support it politically and militarily. Algeria had made a proposal to partition the Moroccan Sahara and had done so out of contempt for the right to self-determination that it claimed to support. Morocco had rejected that proposal.

58. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that the delegation of Morocco should note that the name used by the United Nations was Western Sahara. No other name was used, otherwise the issue would not be under discussion in the context of the Third Committee. As for Amnesty International, there was much to say about the human rights situation in Morocco, and that country should reflect on its own internal problems.

59. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that the delegation of Algeria evidently lacked the political courage to raise any issue other than the Moroccan Sahara, and had done so on the selective grounds of respect for self-determination. The only reason for Algeria to create and support conflict over the Sahara was its determination to harm the territorial integrity of Morocco, advance its hegemonic ambitions in North Africa, and distract its own population from the systemic denial of their rights.

60. The responsibility of Algeria for the conflict in the Moroccan Sahara had been clearly established. With the aim of putting an end to the Algerian-inspired conflict over its Sahara, Morocco had, in good faith, participated in the United Nations process seeking a mutually acceptable political solution. The parties and States in the region, including Algeria, should fully cooperate with the United Nations and each other. The referendum mentioned by Algeria had been pronounced dead and buried by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Security Council for more than 18 years. A more immediate concern was the disastrous situation of people held in the camps in Tindouf who were denied their most elementary rights such as their right to a census. Algeria had denied them those rights in spite of requests from the Security Council and the Secretary-General, and in violation of its international obligations. Lastly, all international reports had noted that the human rights situations in Morocco was far superior to the situation in Algeria.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.